



Canada's Limited Options to Confront the North Korean Threat: Time to Reconsider Ballistic Missile Defence

Commander Paul H. Hong

JCSP 49 DL

Exercise Solo Flight

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Time to Reconsider Ballistic Missile Defence**

Commander Paul H. Hong

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« La présente étude a été rédigée par un stagiaire du Collège des Forces canadiennes pour satisfaire à l'une des exigences du cours. L'étude est un document qui se rapporte au cours et contient donc des faits et des opinions que seul l'auteur considère appropriés et convenables au sujet. Elle ne reflète pas nécessairement la politique ou l'opinion d'un organisme quelconque, y compris le gouvernement du Canada et le ministère de la Défense nationale du Canada. Il est défendu de diffuser, de citer ou de reproduire cette étude sans la permission expresse du ministère de la Défense nationale. »

Canada's Limited Options to Confront the North Korean Threat: Time to Reconsider Ballistic Missile Defence

Introduction

Canada has limited options to confront the significant threat from North Korea. For decades, the international community has underestimated the resilience of the North Korean regime and failed to deter it from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. North Korea may have pursued and obtained nuclear weapons to guarantee its own security, but some fear it could use it for more coercive purposes.¹ The situation on the peninsula has long been complex, and not easily resolved by dramatic gestures.² The carrot-and-stick approach has not really worked and attempts to denuclearize the Korean peninsula have been described as a “Gordian knot of epic proportions”.³ Dictator Kim Jong Un now presides over a relatively stable, monolithic regime where he wields near absolute power.⁴ While his people remain impoverished, Kim Jong Un is estimated to have enough fissile material to build up to 60 nuclear weapons, increasing that capacity to over 200 weapons within a few years with the potential ability to hit targets in North America and beyond.⁵

¹ Scott A. Snyder, “North Korean Strategies and Responses,” in *Negotiation Dynamics to Denuclearize North Korea*, eds. Su-mi Lee and Terence Roehrig (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2023), 61, 85; Bruce W. Bennett, “RAND Commentary: Deterrence of North Korean Limited Nuclear Attacks,” last modified 27 November 2023, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2023/11/deterrence-of-north-korean-limited-nuclear-attacks.html>; and Director of National Intelligence, NIE 2023-00262-B, *National Intelligence Estimate: North Korea: Scenarios for Leveraging Nuclear Weapons Through 2030* (Washington: National Intelligence Council, 2023), I; and Robert L. Carlin and Siegfried S. Hecker, “38 North: Is Kim Jong Un Preparing for War?” last modified 11 January 2024, <https://www.38north.org/2024/01/is-kim-jong-un-preparing-for-war/>.

² Henry Kissinger, *Does American Need a Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 128.

³ Adrian Buzo, “Once More With Feeling,” in *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary North Korea*, ed. Adrian Buzo (New York: Routledge, 2021), 180-182. The Framework deals and other deals did not prevent the North from developing nuclear weapons. In retrospect, negotiations may have forestalled immediate crisis while the North continued with its programs; Terence Roehrig, “The History of North Korea Denuclearization Negotiations,” in *Negotiation Dynamics to Denuclearize North Korea*, eds. Su-mi Lee and Terence Roehrig, 31; and Uk Heo, “South Korea’s Strategy for Denuclearizing North Korea,” in *Negotiation Dynamics to Denuclearize North Korea*, eds. Su-mi Lee and Terence Roehrig, 91.

⁴ Jong-Seok Lee, “Can the Kim Jong-un Regime Survive?” in *Understanding Kim Jong-Un’s North Korea*, ed. Robert Carlin and Chung-in Moon (Lanham: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2022), 25-26, 37. Jong-Seok Lee suggests that Kim, through (relative) reform and pragmatism, has been able to garner public support in North Korea; Rudiger Frank, “The North Korean Economy in Crisis,” in *Understanding Kim Jong-Un’s North Korea*, 39, 47-48. Despite economic crises, there are no signs of immediate collapse in the North Korean system; Gee-dong Lee, “The Status and Role of the North Korean Military During the Kim Jong-un Period,” in *Understanding Kim Jong-Un’s North Korea*, 149-151. Kim successfully seized control of the military apparatus, replacing long-standing core members with his own personnel; Victor D. Cha and Ramon Pacheco Pardo, *Korea: A New History of South and North* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023), 165-166; Defense Intelligence Agency, *North Korea Military Power* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2021), 11; and Kongdan Oh and Ralph Hassig, *North Korea in a Nutshell* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021), 47-49. At the very top of the structure is the leader, who exercises life-and-death power over the people.

⁵ Shane Smith, “Nuclear Weapons and North Korean Foreign Policy,” in *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary North Korea*, ed. Adrian Buzo, 141; Kongdan Oh and Ralph Hassig, *North Korea in a Nutshell*, 103. It was estimated that by 2020, the North had between 20-60 ‘small’ nuclear weapons; Hans

This essay is not a technical paper. It will provide a brief overview of Canada's involvement on the Korean peninsula and propose that the evolving threat posed by the despotic North Korean regime requires Canada to deepen security relations with allies and reconsider its opposition to Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD). With the exception of the Korean War, Canada has played a very modest role on the peninsula. The essay will touch on the role that Canada could play, including through its Navy, in the context of the BMD, to reinvigorate the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and Canada's own defense standing with its most important ally, the United States.

Short History of the Peninsula: Canadian Involvement Modest, but Tolerated

Located between stronger powers, Korea has been at the intersection of great power rivalry for much of its history.⁶ In the 19th century, it was forced by gunboat diplomacy to open up to the West for commerce and Christianity.⁷ It has since remained a focal point of Asian crises and quarreling throughout centuries between the U.S., European, and regional powers.⁸ While not a significant power, Canada's earliest involvement on the peninsula (1888) involved Christian missionaries who not only served to translate Bibles but also worked as physicians and were involved in the Korean independence movement against 'illiberal' Japanese colonial rule. Canadians contributed towards helping Korea modernize, especially in health and education fields (1888-1941).⁹

M. Kristensen and Matt Korda, "North Korean nuclear weapons, 2022," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* 78, no. 5 (2022): 273-276. Estimates ranged in 2022 from 45-55 nuclear weapons; Changsop Pyon, Suk Hi Kim, and Min Xu, "A Preemptive Strike: Will It Resolve the North Korean Nuclear Standoff?" *North Korean Review* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2023): 101-102. While estimates vary, it was thought that North Korea could produce six to seven nuclear weapons per year; and Hwee-rhak Park, "North Korea's nuclear armament strategy and deception," *Defence Studies* 23, no. 1 (2023): 126-127. Reports suggest the North could have between 67-116 nuclear weapons in 2020, produce 12-18 nuclear weapons per year, and possess up to 151-242 nuclear weapons by 2027.

⁶ Allan R. Millet, "Introduction to the Korean War," *The Journal of Military History* 65 (October 2001): 921-923. Millet estimates that Korea (and its predecessors) was invaded or assaulted over 600 times in its 3,000-year history.

⁷ Carter J. Eckert, Ki-baik Lee, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson, and Edward W. Wagner, *Korea Old and New: A History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 195-203. The initial attempts to promote Christianity was brutally repressed. Approximately 8,000 converts were killed; and Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2005), 95-101. Catholics were massacred as early as 1801.

⁸ Carter J. Eckert, Ki-baik Lee, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson, and Edward W. Wagner, *Korea Old and New: A History*, 222-223; Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: First Vintage Books Edition, 1989), 208-209; Henry Kissinger, *Does American Need a Foreign Policy*, 127. Kissinger notes that the 1904 Russo-Japanese War was fought over the question of control over Korea; Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, 86-87; and Sidney M. Milkis and Michael Nelson, *The American Presidency: Origins & Development 1776-1998* (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Books, 1999), 210-211. In the early 1900s, the Americans yielded Korea to Japan in exchange for recognition of its jurisdiction in the Philippines.

⁹ Embassy of the Republic of Korea to Canada, "Korea-Canada Bilateral Relations," last accessed 12 May 2024, https://www.mofa.go.kr/ca-en/wpge/m_5242/contents.do. The Korean government credits a couple hundred Canadian missionaries (over decades) for their contribution towards helping Korea modernize. For the reference on 'illiberal' Japanese colonial rule, see Niall Ferguson, *Empire* (New York: Perseus Books Group, 2002), 247. It was estimated that there were over 6,000 killed, 14,000 injured, and 50,000 imprisoned during the March First Movement in Korea; Jiwon Tina Park, "From Strangers to Partners: Canadian-Korean Relations (1888-1978)" (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2018), 8-12, 33.

Canadians played a small but noteworthy role, and its people were generally better tolerated in comparison to previous missionaries.

At the end of the Second World War, Korea was split at the 38th parallel, with the North under Soviet influence while the South was under American protection.¹⁰ At America's urging, Canada joined the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) to supervise elections, despite having limited ability to influence the outcome.¹¹

Canada's Significant Contribution in the Korean War

When North Korea invaded the South, it triggered a war that brought world powers to the edge of conflict.¹² America's fight against communism compelled it to act.¹³ It chose to take the issue to the United Nations (U.N.) to further gain legitimacy for its actions.¹⁴ The main influencer of Canada's response to any "truly significant" security issue was the American response.¹⁵ Once the U.N. supported intervention, with America at its lead, Canada soon joined the fight (and was one of the largest troop sending

Koreans embraced western missionaries because they were seen to be a balance against Japanese imperialists.

¹⁰ Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, 187. The decision to split the country at the 38th parallel was made by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee by two American Colonels, Dean Rusk and Charles H. Bonesteel, in under an hour, on August 10-11, 1945. The 38th parallel was chosen to ensure that the capital remained in the American zone. No Koreans were consulted in this process. Author's Note: Unsurprisingly, Canada was also not consulted. Canada did not factor into the equation then. See also Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2011), 123.

¹¹ John Price, "The Cat's 'Paw': Canada and the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea," *The Canadian Historical Review* 85, no. 2 (June 2004): 306; and Jiwon Tina Park, "From Strangers to Partners: Canadian-Korean Relations (1888-1978)" 83-91. The organization was wholly reliant on American support for lodgings, transport and supplies.

¹² Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 382. It was interpreted in the USA as a plan orchestrated by the Soviets; and Henry Kissinger, *On China*, 122. The US and China technically were in a "military confrontation".

¹³ Sidney M. Milkis and Michael Nelson, *The American Presidency: Origins & Development 1776-1998*, 281. President Truman even argued *rhetorically* that the *UN Participation Act* had obliged America to act(!); and Gary R. Hess, *Presidential Decisions for War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 9, 18. Truman wrote in his memoirs that if Korea fell, he feared that the Communists would "override nations" closer to America. Author's Note: Hence, Korea mattered to the Americans, and therefore, it got additional consideration in Canada.

¹⁴ Gary R. Hess, *Presidential Decisions for War*, 25.

¹⁵ United States Department of State, *Document 130 Papers of Dean Acheson - Memorandum of Conversation - July 29, 1950* (Washington: State Department, 1950). The American Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, pressed the Canadian Minister of External Affairs, Lester B. Pearson, to send troops, noting that Australia and New Zealand had already committed forces; and Jiwon Tina Park, "From Strangers to Partners: Canadian-Korean Relations (1888-1978)" 74. Canada became the third-largest troop contributing country, motivated more by its relations with the U.S. and the U.N. than its policies to the Korean peninsula; and Denis Stairs, "Canada and the Korean War: Fifty Years On," *Canadian Military History* 9, no. 3 (2000): 50-54. Canada privately protested to the Americans during the war about the appearance of the U.S. acting unilaterally. It did not appear to have much, if any, practical effect.

countries).¹⁶ More than 26,000 Canadians served in this vicious war and over 500 Canadians died.¹⁷

Table 1.1 – Canada’s Noteworthy Contribution to the Korean War

Service	Contribution
Canadian Navy	Eight (8) warships, over 3600 sailors
Canadian Army	Over 8,500 troops.
Canadian Airforce	Transport duties, provided over 600 trans-Pacific flights.
Source: Veterans Affairs Canada, “The Korean War,” last modified 7 March 2022.	

Following the armistice of 1953, most of the countries (the U.S. being the main exception) withdrew their forces. Approximately 7,000 Canadians continued to serve on the peninsula in a peace support role until 1957. From the early days of western involvement on the Korean peninsula, Canada was present in some form – from missionaries, to advisors, to defenders. Canada’s role was tolerated and welcomed, not just by Koreans, but by its most important ally, the United States.

Canada’s Modest Modern-Day Involvement – Some Ships and Officers

Canada has maintained a continuous presence in the United Nations Command (UNC) in Korea, the unified command structure for multinational forces, but its contribution has been modest since the late 1950s. Despite this, a Canadian became the first non-American deputy commander of the UNC in 2018.¹⁸

On North Korea, Canada eschewed playing an ‘honest broker’ role that some had advocated.¹⁹ Instead, Canada provided moral clarity with respect to where it stood,

¹⁶ Clint Work, “UN Sending States: The Forgotten Parties in the Korean War,” *The Diplomat*, 7 August 2023, <https://www.proquest.com>; and Denis Stairs, “Canada and the Korean War: Fifty Years On,” 54. Even Quebecers (who were historically reticent to support military engagements abroad) were broadly supportive of the U.N. lead (American) efforts.

¹⁷ Veterans Affairs Canada. “Korean War: 1950-1953,” last modified 13 July 2022, <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/remembrance/wars-and-conflicts/korean-war>; Julie Smyth, “The fog of a forgotten war,” *Maclean’s*, 17 July 2013, 50-52. This war was known for its high rates of causing post-traumatic stress disorder.

¹⁸ Department of National Defence, “Chief of Defence Staff – Biography,” last modified 26 May 2023, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/organizational-structure/chief-defence-staff/cds-bio.html>. General Wayne Eyre, Canada’s Chief of Defence Staff, served as the first non-American deputy commander of the UNC; and Clint Work, “UN Sending States: The Forgotten Parties in the Korean War,” *The Diplomat*, 7 August 2023, <https://www.proquest.com>. Canada also participated in “combined command defense exercises” since the 2010s.

¹⁹ Robert Bedeski, “Peace and Neutrality on the Korean Peninsula: A Role for Canada?” *Pacific Affairs* 73, no. 4 (Winter 2000), 555-557.

including eliminating virtually all trade with the country.²⁰ Along with Western allies, it has applied sanctions on the regime, albeit with limited effect.²¹

Canada's other recent contributions remain of a limited, but noteworthy nature, including contributing naval officers as investigators to examine the sinking of the South Korean warship *Cheonan* (2010) from a North Korean torpedo.²² Canada's participation was welcomed by South Korea and the United States.

Today, Canada continues to participate in multinational surveillance efforts to counter North Korean sanctions evasions at sea. Through Operation NEON, a frigate and air assets are periodically deployed to the region to contribute towards a coordinated, U.S. backed multinational effort to support U.N. Security Council sanctions against the North Korean regime.²³ Canada's military presence alone, while not much of a deterrent against North Korean aggression, continues to contribute to international efforts in modest ways.

State of North Korea's Military: Missiles and Nuclear Weapons

The South has the conventional military advantage, both in quality of personnel but also in modernized equipment, compared to the North (see Table 1.2). Hence, the North's emphasis on asymmetric capabilities and its missile and nuclear programs, which

²⁰ Global Affairs Canada, "Minister Cannon Issues Statement on the Situation in the Korean Peninsula," last modified 26 May 2010, <https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2010/05/minister-cannon-issues-statement-situation-korean-peninsula.html>; and Global Affairs Canada, "Notice to Exporters: Export Controls to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," last modified 4 February 2014, <https://www.international.gc.ca/controls-controles/systems-systemes/excol-ceed/notices-avis/172.aspx?lang=eng>. North Korea was added to the Area Control List.

²¹ Thomas J. Biersteker and Zuzana Hudakova, "International Sanctions on North Korea: Are They Working?" in *Understanding Kim Jong-Un's North Korea*, ed. Robert Carlin and Chung-in Moon, 185-186, 198. Studies show that sanctions in general are only effective about a quarter of the time. Sanctions on North Korea had limited effect; and Changsoo Pyon, Suk Hi Kim, and Min Xu, "A Preemptive Strike: Will It Resolve the North Korean Nuclear Standoff?" 102-103. Failure by some countries (eg China) to fully enforce sanctions have contributed to their failure in the North Korean case.

²² Prime Minister's Office, "Statement by the Prime Minister of Canada," last modified 24 May 2010, <https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2010/05/statement-prime-minister-canada-534599.html>; Global Affairs Canada, "Statement by Ministers Cannon and MacKay on the Results of the Multinational Enquiry into the Sinking of the Cheonan," last modified 19 May 2010, <https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2010/05/statement-ministers-cannon-mackay-results-multinational-enquiry-into-sinking-cheonan.html>; Global Affairs Canada, "Statement by Minister Cannon on UNSC Meeting on Sinking of *Cheonan*," last modified 16 June 2010, <https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2010/06/statement-minister-cannon-uns-c-meeting-sinking-south-korean-vessel-cheonan.html>; and Prime Minister's Office, "Statement by the Prime Minister of Canada," last modified 9 July 2010, <https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2010/07/statement-prime-minister-canada-546599.html>.

²³ Department of National Defense, "Operation NEON," last modified 8 November 2023, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/operation-neon.html>. Prior to 2019, visits to the region were conducted under Operation PROJECTION; Sungwhah Ko, *Korea and Canada: Stronger Together for the Peace and Stability of the Korean Peninsula* (Calgary: Canadian Global Affairs Institute, 2024), 6. In 2019, a Chinese fighter jet 'buzzed' a Canadian frigate which was operating in the region.

it has used to obtain concessions (through ‘blackmail’ and deception) from the international community.²⁴

²⁴ CSIS: Missile Defense Project, “Missiles of North Korea,” last modified 22 November 2022, <https://missilethreat.csis.org/country/dprk/>; Henry Kissinger, *Does American Need a Foreign*, 128; Richard Fisher, “The Heritage Foundation: Time To Stop North Korea’s Missile Blackmail,” last modified 8 November 1998, <https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/time-stop-north-koreas-missile-blackmail>; Tristan Volpe, “The Unraveling of North Korea’s Proliferation Blackmail Strategy,” in *North Korea and Nuclear Weapons*, ed. Sung Chull Kim and Michael D. Cohen (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2017), 73-74; David Frum and Richard Perle, *An End to Evil* (New York: Random House, 2003), 101-104, 253; and Hwee-rhak Park, “North Korea’s nuclear armament strategy and deception,” 130-136.

Table 1.2 – Comparing the militaries of South and North Korea²⁵

²⁵ Shane Smith, “Nuclear Weapons and North Korean Foreign Policy,” in *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary North Korea*, ed. Adrian Buzo, 143; Victor D. Cha and David C. King, eds. *Nuclear North Korea: A Debate on Engagement Strategies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 20, 51-54; Kongdan Oh and Ralph Hassig, *North Korea in a Nutshell*, 90-91, 95. North Korean soldiers are shorter and thin compared to South Korean soldiers. This is due to malnourishment. It is estimated that soldiers only receive 70 grams of food (per meal), which equates to a 1/4-1/3 of the recommended daily nutritional intake; Ryo Hinata-Yamaguchi, *Defense Planning and Readiness of North Korea* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 81-83. It is estimated that North Korea expended between 19% (early 1960s) to 30% (late 1960s), then decreased to an average of 17% of GDP. U.S. estimates North’s expenditures at 23% of its GDP on defence (2007-2017). What is considered ‘defence’ is unclear, as the North uses its military to conduct non-traditional military ventures, including agriculture and industrial work; Defense Intelligence Agency, *North Korea Military Power*, 4, 13, 37, 40-55; Ellie Cook, “Newsweek Magazine: How North and South Korean Militaries Compare,” last modified 23 January 2024, <https://www.newsweek.com/north-korea-south-korea-military-forces-spending-1862683>; and Mohammed Haddad and Alia Chughtai, “Infographic: North Korea, South Korea missile programmes compared,” last modified 16 September 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/16/infographic-missile-programmes-north-korea-v-south-korea-interactive>.

Category	South Korea	North Korea	Advantage	Note
Navy	70,000	60,000	South	
Submarines	19	70	-	North sank a SK warship in 2010.
Capital Ships (Frigates/Destroyers)	12 destroyers 13 frigates	0	South	North lacks a shipbuilding industry.
Patrol Craft/Other	120	680	South	
Air Force	65,000	110,000		
Fighter craft	200 (F-15/16) 160-300 other	550-900	South	North has old MiGs. South has superior modern jets.
Helicopters	480+	200-300	South	
Army	460,000	1.1M		
Artillery	11,000-12,000+	21,000+	North	
Tanks	2,130-2,220	3,000-4,200	South	North: Most tanks are old (WWII-1950s era).
Armoured Fighting Vehicles	3,000+	2,200-10,000	South	
Special Forces	13,500	189,000-200,000	North	
Strategic Force		10,000	North	North: controls 200+ mobile ballistic missile launchers.
Total Active Forces	600,000	1.28M	South	North: 4 th largest army in the world (but malnourished).
Total Est. Reserve:	3M	5.7M-7M	South	North: More numbers, but poorly trained.
Est. % of GDP Spent on Defence	2.5%	25%	South	
Total Population	52M	26M	South	
Advantage assessment conducted by author				
<p>The North has one of the largest militaries. However, its personnel are malnourished, and its equipment is in poor shape. For decades (1960s-1970s), the North arguably had a superior military force to the South. However, the quality of its forces degraded following the collapse of the Soviet Union and North Korea's famine in the 1990s.</p> <p>Sources: Defense Intelligence Agency, <i>Nuclear North Korea: A Debate on Engagement Strategies</i>, Routledge <i>Handbook of Contemporary North Korea</i>, <i>North Korea in a Nutshell</i>, <i>Newsweek</i>, <i>Aljazeera</i> <i>Defense Planning and Readiness of North Korea</i></p>				

While South Korea gave up its own nuclear programs (under American pressure), the North has invested heavily in weapons of mass destruction.²⁶ While the North had desired nuclear weapons for decades, the advancements accelerated after it withdrew from the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2002. It then conducted its first nuclear test in 2006. Under Kim Jong Un, North Korea conducted four underground nuclear tests (consolidating Kim's position in the military) and declared itself to be nuclear power.²⁷

²⁶ Patrick McEachern, *North Korea: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 72-74.

²⁷ Defense Intelligence Agency, *North Korea Military Power*, 6, 21. These tests (2013, 2016 x 2, 2017) were higher in yield than the two (2006, 2009) conducted prior to Kim Jong Un taking power; Victor D. Cha and Ramon Pacheco Pardo, *Korea: A History of South and North*, 168; and David Cronk, "A Dragon by the Tail: North Korea's Manipulation of China," (Joint Command Staff Program Paper, Canadian Forces College, 2018), 8. Cronk notes that the nuclear program advanced despite Chinese hesitation, underlying Chinese limitations to influence the regime in Pyongyang.

North Korea's missile program ramped up in the late 1990s. Since then, it has conducted numerous tests to refine its research and development. There were 100 missile tests in 2022 alone. The North was even able to test mobile rocket launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).²⁸ The North's testing of larger ICBMs in 2022-2023 showed that it could have multiple re-entry decoys and carry up to four nuclear warheads. New solid-propellant ICBMs will also reduce launch times.²⁹ These tests are some of the few successes that the regime can claim.³⁰

North Korea has also demonstrated a significant increase in technological ability to launch ICBMs, which can now reach the continental United States and Canada.

Some perceive the threat from North Korea as "really farcical" and instead call on "military-to-military confidence building dialogue" between the Koreas.³¹ Other analysts opine that North Korea is acting in a defensive posture, seeking just a second-strike nuclear capability, and that its remarks to reunify the peninsula are *just* 'ritualistic' rhetoric.³²

Given the North's efforts to acquire nuclear weapons and its belief that this not only brings prestige but is the only true deterrent to regime change, it is highly unlikely that Pyongyang will give up this capability.³³ The passage of the North's *Nuclear Forces Law* in 2022 declaring nuclear irreversibility and options to *pre-emptively* use nuclear

²⁸ Patrick McEachern, *North Korea: What Everyone Needs to Know*, 80-83, 96. The author notes that the challenge is not just placing a warhead on a missile but ensuring that it can withstand atmospheric re-entry and hit a specific target (that is far away). At the time, American officials warned that the North was only months away from developing the capability to strike North America with a nuclear weapon; Robert Soofer, "Is the United States falling behind the North Korean ICBM threat? Congress needs answers," last modified 11 April 2024, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/is-the-united-states-falling-behind-the-north-korean-icbm-threat-congress-needs-answers/>; Defense Intelligence Agency, *North Korea Military Power* 25; and Denny Roy, "Why North Korean Nuclear Blackmail is Unlikely," *East-West Center* 26, no. 161 (November 2023): 2.

²⁹ Robert Soofer, "Is the United States falling behind the North Korean ICBM threat? Congress needs answers," last modified 11 April 2024, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/is-the-united-states-falling-behind-the-north-korean-icbm-threat-congress-needs-answers/>; Bruce Klingner, "North Korea's Growing ICBM Threat: How America and South Korea Should Respond," last modified 15 February 2023, <https://www.heritage.org/asia/commentary/north-koreas-growing-icbm-threat-how-america-and-south-korea-should-respond>.

³⁰ Bruce W. Bennett, "The Politics of North Korea's ICBM Program," *National Interest* (blog), 1 January 2024, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/korea-watch/politics-north-korea%E2%80%99s-icbm-program-208269>.

³¹ Defense Intelligence Agency, *North Korea Military Power*, 6; Changsop Pyon, Suk Hi Kim, and Min Xu, "A Preemptive Strike: Will It Resolve the North Korean Nuclear Standoff?" 101; and Murray Brewster and Hannah Thibedeau, "If the U.S. is alarmed about North Korea, 'we should be alarmed,' says MacKay," last modified 1 August 2017, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/ballistic-missile-canada-1.4231413>. Peggy Mason of the Rideau Institute is skeptical about the threat from the DPRK.

³² Denny Roy, "Why North Korean Nuclear Blackmail is Unlikely," 1-5.

³³ David Cronk, "A Dragon by the Tail: North Korea's Manipulation of China," 10-12; Dingli Shen, "North Korea, nuclear weapons, and the search for a new path forward," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* 72, no. 5 (2016): 345-346. Some argue that the realistic approach is negotiating with the North to limit their arsenal to present levels.

weapons are disconcerting.³⁴ While Canadian missionaries were hopeful for success in Korea, Canadian military planners and leaders cannot rely on ‘hope’ or ‘prayers’ as courses of action. Canada should prepare for North Korea taking coercive actions and worst-case scenarios.

Canada should re-consider joining Ballistic Missile Defence: What is BMD?

BMD is an “integrated, layered architecture” system to counter missiles at all ranges. Its goal is to provide multiple opportunities to destroy missiles at all phases of their trajectory, from the boost, mid-course, and terminal phases. It utilizes sensors on the ground, sea, and space and launches interceptors from the ground and sea.³⁵



Figure 1.1 – American BMD

Source: U.S. Defense Department, www.mda.mil/system/system.html

Improving Defense Relations with the United States

Canada and the United States have an undeniably close relationship, not only due to its values and similar interests, but particularly by its geography, sharing the longest

³⁴ Sunghwah Ko, *Korea and Canada: Stronger Together for the Peace and Stability of the Korean Peninsula*, 1-2. The preconditions to using nuclear weapons were lowered. Although some still believe its main use is for deterrent purposes.

³⁵ U.S. Missile Defense Agency. “The Ballistic Missile Defense System,” last modified 12 March 2024, <https://www.mda.mil/system/system.html>.

land border in the world.³⁶ Defence cooperation spans over seven decades.³⁷ Over the last decade or so, Canada is perceived to have aligned its security and defence interests more closely with the United States.³⁸

Following the 9/11 attacks, America placed renewed emphasis on burden-sharing by its allies.³⁹ For moral and strategic reasons, Canada was a heavy contributor to the War on Terror, particularly in Afghanistan, which was appreciated by successive U.S. administrations. However, American officials were perplexed and disappointed when Canada, under then Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin, ostensibly flip-flopped and announced Canada would not join BMD in 2005 to help defend the Homeland.⁴⁰ The manner of the announcement was directed with Canadian domestic considerations in mind.⁴¹ This was not the first time that Canada declined to join BMD (1984-85, 2005) under Liberal and Conservative governments.⁴² A decision to not re-open the debate in 2012 was somewhat more surprising under then Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who had a majority government yet still declined to reconsider the issue that was proposed by his then Ministers of National Defence and Foreign Affairs.⁴³ Domestic

³⁶ Taylor Jackson and Christopher Sands, "United States-Canada Relations", in *The Palgrave Handbook of Canada in International Affairs*, ed. Robert W. Murray and Paul Gecelovsky (New York: Springer International Publishing AG, 2021), 546; and Global Affairs Canada, "Canada-United States relations," last modified 27 June 2023, <https://www.international.gc.ca/country-pays/us-eu/relations.aspx?lang=eng>. Over 400,000 people and \$3.4 billion in goods and services cross the border daily; and United States, "U.S. Relations With Canada," last modified 19 August 2022, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-canada/#:~:text=U.S.-CANADA%20RELATIONS,cross%20between%20us%20every%20day>.

³⁷ Global Affairs Canada, "U.S.-Canada/Canada-U.S. Supply Chains Progress Report," last modified 9 June 2022, https://www.international.gc.ca/transparence-transparence/supply_chains_progress_report-rapport_etape_chaine_approvisionnement.aspx?lang=eng. The integration of industrial bases have helped to create and maintain domestic defence industries.

³⁸ Nancy Teeple, "Canada and Missile Defence: A New Strategic Context Requires Revisiting Participation," last modified 7 August 2020, https://www.naadsn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/20-August_Teeple_Policy-Brief-Canada-Missile-Defence.pdf. Teeple also notes that Canadian advocacy for nuclear disarmament has also decreased over the past two decades.

³⁹ Taylor Jackson and Christopher Sands, "United States-Canada Relations", 544.

⁴⁰ Andy Blatchford, "Canada taking 'comprehensive look' at joining U.S. ballistic missile defense," last modified 10 May 2022, <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/05/10/canada-eyeing-bold-and-aggressive-military-options-to-defend-continent-00031349>; Brian Bow, "Defence Dilemmas: Continental Defence Cooperation, from Bomarc to BMD," *Canadian Foreign Policy* 15, no. 1 (March 2011): 40; David Rudd, "Muddling Through on Missile Defence: The Politics of Indecision," *Policy Options* (May 2005): 31, last accessed 17 May 2024, <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/assets/po/defending-north-america/rudd.pdf>. David Rudd opines that the decision was reached for domestic political reasons, in the context of a minority Parliament and opposition to BMD in Quebec. For an alternative view, see Wade Boese, "Canada Spurs Bush on Missile Defense," last accessed 17 May 2024, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2005-04/canada-spurns-bush-missile-defense>.

⁴¹ Brian Bow, "Defence Dilemmas: Continental Defence Cooperation, from Bomarc to BMD," 47-48.

⁴² Rideau Institute, "Even more reasons for Canada to stay out of American ballistic missile defence," last modified 18 October 2021, <https://rideauinstitute.ca/2021/10/18/even-more-reasons-for-canada-to-stay-out-of-american-ballistic-missile-defence/>.

⁴³ David S. McDonough, *Back to the Future: Debating Missile Defence in Canada... Again* (Calgary: Canadian Global Affairs Institute, 2013), 2; and Murray Brewster and Hannah Thibedeau, "If the U.S. is alarmed about North Korea, 'we should be alarmed,' says MacKay," last modified 1 August 2017,

political considerations were likely a determining factor, both in the 2005 and 2012 decision-making processes.⁴⁴

It would appear that Prime Minister Harper did not assess the challenge from North Korea to be an acute threat (to Canada) between 2006-2015, despite the positions that his government took condemning the actions of the North Korean regime (in over 40 public statements between 2009-2013, listed in Appendix A).⁴⁵

The rapid development of Pyongyang's ICBM capabilities since 2015 potentially changes the dynamics and makes it an opportune time for Canada to reconsider its opposition to BMD. This could further strengthen Canada-U.S. relations on defense (where Canada is viewed as a "laggard"), and support Canada's interests in NORAD.⁴⁶

Further Supporting NORAD?

*'The Canadian Armed Forces are tasked to "detect, deter and defend" North America against threats, including through collaboration with the United States and NORAD.'*⁴⁷

Continental defence has historically been neglected by defence departments, with occasional investments.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, NORAD's role has expanded over the years to include drug interdiction assistance (1990s), counter terrorism (post-9/11), and a maritime

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/ballistic-missile-canada-1.4231413>. Former Defence Ministers Mackay (Conservative) and David Pratt (Liberal) both are on the record in favour the BMD. MacKay lamented publicly in 2017 about not signing onto the BMD when he was Minister.

⁴⁴ Jeffrey F. Collins, "Should Canada Participate in Ballistic Missile Defence? A Survey of the Experts," 16, last modified 9 July 2018, https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/mli-files/pdf/MLI_BMD_FinalWeb.pdf.

⁴⁵ Jordan Press, "Harper leaves door open for Canada to join ballistic missile defence program," last modified 14 August 2015, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/election/harper-leaves-door-open-for-canada-to-join-ballistic-missile-defence-program-1.2516920>. Prime Minister Harper is quoted as saying "Our position is that we keep evaluating our options. If we felt that at any point in time that we faced particular threats that required us to participate, that is something we would look at. At the present time, we haven't made that assessment."

⁴⁶ Bryan Passifiume, "Canada's new defence policy isn't winning America over, analysts say," last modified 27 May 2024, <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/canadas-new-defence-policy-isnt-winning-america-over-analysts-say>. Twenty-three American Senators (including 10 Republicans), signed a letter to PM Trudeau demanding that Canada meet its international commitments and at least 2% (of GDP) in defence spending. Author's Note: Considering that Canada continues to have no plans to meet the minimum 2% target (much to the chagrin of the U.S. and allies), it is not surprising that Canada is seen by American policy makers as being a "laggard on defense".

⁴⁷ Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2017), 14, 16-17, 83, 106, 113. The document also calls for modernizing NORAD to meet the full range of threats.

⁴⁸ Andrea Charron and James Fergusson, "Defending the Continent: NORAD Modernization and Beyond," last modified May 2022, https://www.cgai.ca/defending_the_continent_norad_modernization_and_beyond. Continental defence is described by the authors as historically a tertiary priority, neglected for extended periods, with brief flurries of investment; and Department of National Defence, "Fact sheet: Funding for Continental Defence and NORAD Modernization," last modified 21 July 2022, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/allies-partners/norad/facesheet-funding-norad-modernization.html>. In 2022, Canada announced investments of \$38.6B over the next 20 years for Canada's NORAD Modernization Plan.

warning mission (2006). As the world's only binational command, NORAD has provided Canada with "privileged insight" into American military thinking to defend the continent and become a "timeless organ" for collective security.⁴⁹

In fact, America's defense arrangements with Canada exceed that of any other country.⁵⁰ When Canada declined to participate in BMD, it did not spell the end of NORAD as some had feared.⁵¹ But it may have contributed to its continued marginalization. The Americans can now bypass the organization entirely when it comes to certain aspects of BMD. That leaves Canada mostly out. However, as the U.S. continues to explore options for additional sites for its interceptors and radars, analysts assess that the Americans appear open to negotiating Canadian participation.⁵² Could the system work? Could NORAD have a greater role?

Addressing Critics and Technological Concerns

Critics claim the system does not technologically work and is not cost effective.⁵³ However, according to the statistics provided by the US Missile Defence Agency, BMD technology has showed improvement in recent years:

⁴⁹ Andrea Charron, "Quick Impact: Responding to the Hardening the SHIELD: A Credible Deterrent and Capable Defense for North America," last modified 11 September 2020, https://www.naadsn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/20-Sept_Charron_Responding-to-the-Hardening-the-SHIELD_Quick-Impact.pdf; United States, "U.S. Relations With Canada," last modified 19 August 2022, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-canada/#:~:text=U.S.-CANADA%20RELATIONS,cross%20between%20us%20every%20day>; and Andrew B. Godefroy, *Canada's Space Policy and its Future with NORAD* (Calgary: Canadian Global Affairs Institute, 2016), 1. Defense spending on NORAD was less than \$100M per year in 2016.

⁵⁰ United States, "U.S. Relations With Canada," last modified 19 August 2022, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-canada/#:~:text=U.S.-CANADA%20RELATIONS,cross%20between%20us%20every%20day>.

⁵¹ NORAD continues to contribute to continental security, even helping to track and shoot down slow moving Chinese spy balloons(!). See Vincent Rigby, "CSIS: Up in the Air: The Spy Balloon and What It Means for Canada," last modified 3 March 2023, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/air-spy-balloon-and-what-it-means-canada>. The political and media saga of the balloons may have 'blown' over, but it demonstrated the gaps in Canadian defence.

⁵² James Ferguson, "The NORAD conundrum: Canada, missile defence, and military space," *International Journal* 70, no. 2 (2015): 197-198, 205, 207-209.

⁵³ Rideau Institute, "Even more reasons for Canada to stay out of American ballistic missile defence," last modified 18 October 2021, <https://rideauinstitute.ca/2021/10/18/even-more-reasons-for-canada-to-stay-out-of-american-ballistic-missile-defence/>; Ernie Regehr, "US Strategic Ballistic Missile Defence-Why Canada won't join it – Arctic Security Briefing Paper, last modified 11 July 2023, <https://www.thesimonsfoundation.ca/highlights/us-strategic-ballistic-missile-defence-why-canada-wont-join-it>; and Brian Bow, "Defence Dilemmas: Continental Defence Cooperation, from Bomarc to BMD," 44-45. Bow notes that opposition has faded with the increase in successful tests and other countries signing on to participate in some aspects of BMD.

Table 1.3 – BMD Test Results 2002-2014

Type	Interception Phase	Intercepted	Attempts	Success Rate	Note
Sea-based BMD	Boost & Ascent	28	34	82%	Between 2002-2014
Ground-Based	Mid-course	8	16	50%	1999-2014
Terminal High Altitude Area Defense	Final stage	11	11	100%	Between 2006-2014
Total		47	61	77%	
Source: Frank Harvey, Colin Robertson, and James Fergusson, <i>Canada and Ballistic Missile Defence</i> , 3.					

An assessment is that the various aspects of the BMD program can, in theory, defend against limited attacks from rogue nations, such as North Korea.⁵⁴ It is no longer meant to be protect against a “full-blown attack” from Russia or China, thus should not be a destabilizing factor in great power rivalry.⁵⁵

However, given the rate of ICBM development by the North (with over 11 of its largest Hwasong-17 missiles already built), the current 44 ground-based interceptors in the United States (Alaska and California) may be overwhelmed in their capacity to defend the continent in the future.⁵⁶ Additional sites could be required.

Critics have also suggested that NORAD provides sufficient protection, perhaps forgetting that at the critical juncture, Canada is not involved in the decision-making process and does not have much sway in what is actually protected.⁵⁷ Metaphorically, Canada would not have to ‘leave the room’ when the issue comes up – Canadians would

⁵⁴ National Research Council of the National Academies, *Making Sense of Ballistic Missile Defence* (Washington: The National Academy Press, 2012), 13, <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/13189/chapter/2#12>. The authors noted the shortcomings of the GMD tests; and Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, “GMD: Frequently Asked Questions,” last accessed 18 May 2024, <https://armscontrolcenter.org/issues/missile-defense/gmd-frequently-asked-questions/#:~:text=Across%20the%20entire%20missile%20defense,to%20smaller%2C%20regional%20coverage%20areas>. Detractors note that outside of shorter-range systems (Patriot and THAAD programs), the GMD program is at 55% effectiveness.

⁵⁵ Frank Harvey, Colin Robertson, and James Fergusson, *Canada and Ballistic Missile Defence* (Calgary: Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute, 2014), 4-6.

⁵⁶ Bruce Klingner, “North Korea’s Growing ICBM Threat: How America and South Korea Should Respond,” last modified 15 February 2023, <https://www.heritage.org/asia/commentary/north-koreas-growing-icbm-threat-how-america-and-south-korea-should-respond>. Each ICBM fired at North America would have multiple interceptors fired at it.

⁵⁷ Stephan Gresmak, “Time to go Ballistic,” (Joint Command Staff Program Paper, Canadian Forces College, 2014), 12; James Fergusson, “The NORAD conundrum: Canada, missile defence, and military space,” *International Journal* 70, no. 2 (2015): 203-204. Fergusson states that the U.S., in the lead up to the 2005 decision, noted that it would not provide a formal guarantee to protect Canada; David S. McDonough, *Back to the Future: Debating Missile Defence in Canada...Again*, 3-4; and Frank Harvey, Colin Robertson, and James Fergusson, *Canada and Ballistic Missile Defence*, 11. Some critics have also compared BMD to a modern day Maginot Line. See David Krieger, “Missile Defence and the Maginot Line,” last modified 18 February 2001, <https://www.wagingpeace.org/missile-defense-and-the-maginot-line/>.

just not be at the table.⁵⁸ Even though NORAD tracks aerospace threats, including missiles, the actual interception falls to U.S. Missile Command and U.S. Northern Command, a separate entity.

Given the limited number of chances to take out incoming missiles, active involvement would increase Canada's chances of being protected from attack. Even if the risk of attack appears low, the consequences would be very high. Active involvement would also further deepen Canada's commitment to the binational command and portray Canada as a stronger partner.⁵⁹

Can Canada Afford It? The Budget Does Not Balance Itself. But...

The cost to signing onto BMD is uncertain as there has yet to be a price on membership. Some have opined that it would not come with an admission price, since the system is essentially in place.⁶⁰ Others have estimated that it could be upwards of \$10 billion for the Ground-Based Midcourse (GMD) program if Canada chose to have Canadian interceptors.⁶¹ Spending billions on a remote possibility could seem wasteful. But as opined by the *Globe & Mail's* editorial board, in the event that a [nuclear] missile was targeted to Canada, it would be "worth roughly all the money in the world" to have the opportunity to provide protection.⁶² The price tag would really depend on Canada's involvement, in-kind or asymmetric contributions, such as provision of real estate.⁶³ This could include provision of facilities to enhance the "the effectiveness of missile tracking" for American interceptors.⁶⁴ Alternatively, the U.S. could simply ask Canada to openly support BMD (less relevant today as other countries already have stated their support to

⁵⁸ Steven Chase, "NORAD upgrade reignites debate over missile defence," last modified 21 June 2022, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-norad-upgrade-reignites-debate-over-missile-defence/>. According to Canadian studies Professor Joseph Jockel (St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York): "Canadians are assuming the United States is going to defend Canada against ballistic missiles. That is not necessarily the case. The U.S. ballistic missiles defence system is very limited. If you give up your shots to protect Vancouver, you have less capability to protect San Francisco. Show me an American general who would sacrifice San Francisco to protect Vancouver."

⁵⁹ Nancy Teeple, "Canada and Missile Defence: A New Strategic Context Requires Revisiting Participation," last modified 7 August 2020, https://www.naadsn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/20-August_Teeple_Policy-Brief-Canada-Missile-Defence.pdf.

⁶⁰ Frank Harvey, Colin Robertson, and James Fergusson, *Canada and Ballistic Missile Defence*, 11. The authors of the report argue that future costs could be shared.

⁶¹ Jeffrey F. Collins, "Should Canada Participate in Ballistic Missile Defence? A Survey of the Experts," 14.

⁶² Editorial, *Globe and Mail*, 16 January 2018, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/editorials/globe-editorial-its-time-for-the-liberals-to-get-serious-about-missile-defence/article37626449/>. The editors opined on possible scenarios where Kim Jong Un could target Canada (instead of the United States) to show it could hit North America, or whereby Kim's missiles are meant for the U.S. but veers off course and lands in Canada.

⁶³ Jeffrey F. Collins, "Should Canada Participate in Ballistic Missile Defence? A Survey of the Experts," 14-15.

⁶⁴ James Fergusson, "The NORAD conundrum: Canada, missile defence, and military space," 205.

missile defence and BMD has been endorsed by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a permanent mission for the Alliance).⁶⁵

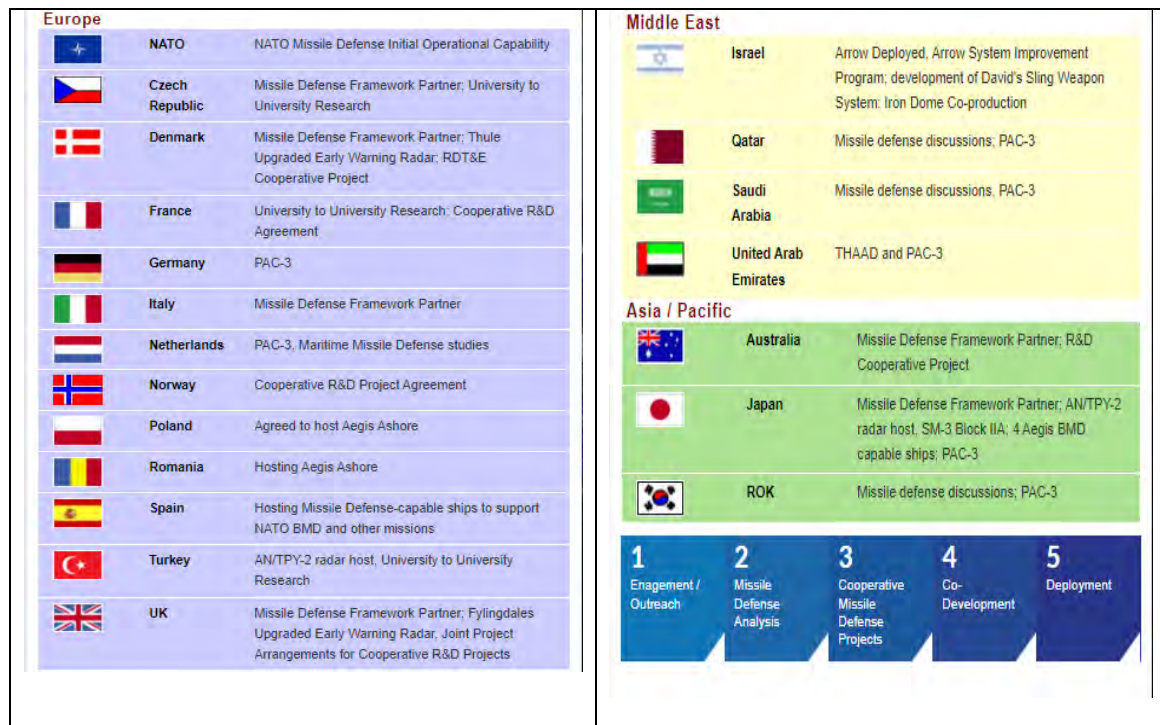


Figure 1.2 – International Cooperation with American Missile Defence

Source: U.S. Defense Department, www.mda.mil/system/international_cooperation.html

The influence that Canada could obtain by joining could be in determining the interception priorities list for protection and targeting. At least it gets Canada to the ‘table’ and could make Canada part of the detection, guidance or research and development modes.⁶⁶ Canada could also benefit by receiving access to “new emerging” technologies, which could help offset costs associated with investing in the program.⁶⁷ It really depends

⁶⁵ NATO. “Ballistic missile defence,” last modified 26 July 2023, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49635.htm; Alan W. Dowd, “Time for Canada to Join the Missile Defense Team,” last modified 25 June 2013, <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2013/06/25/canada-to-join-the-missile-defense-team-its-about-time/>. Some NATO member states, Australia, Japan and Israel all cooperate with the U.S. on various aspects of missile defense. Even countries in the Middle East participate, with Qatar housing an X-Band radar and the UAE purchasing the Terminal High Altitude Air Defense System (THAAD).

⁶⁶ House of Commons, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, no. 1, Thursday, 4 November 2004, 10:30; Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *Military Underfunded: The Walk Must Match the Talk* (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, 2017), 31-32.

⁶⁷ Nancy Teeple, “Canada and Missile Defence: A New Strategic Context Requires Revisiting Participation,” last modified 7 August 2020, https://www.naadsn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/20-August_Teeple_Policy-Brief-Canada-Missile-Defence.pdf; Camille Raymond, “Thinking About the Modernization of NORAD,” last modified 24 November 2020, <https://ras-nsa.ca/thinking-the-modernization-of-norad/>. Some believe that Canadian industry can readily participate and benefit in the development of these technologies.

on Canada’s ability to negotiate. Canada could also find other ways to be helpful, including leveraging a niche role for its navy.

Canada should increase Naval Security Cooperation in East Asia

Canada already recognizes that North Korea is a serious threat to regional and international peace and security.⁶⁸ However, outside of dialogues and participation in exercises, Canada’s defense initiatives are limited.⁶⁹ The recent launch of the ‘Indo-Pacific’ strategy in 2022 aims to build capacity in Asia, including with South Korea and Japan, with ‘enhanced’ military presence, including increasing the number of deployed frigates to the region.⁷⁰ It generally favours an incremental approach, commits to opening “new opportunities for security cooperation”, advancing existing dialogues, and maintaining Operation NEON to support sanction efforts on North Korea.⁷¹ The strategy, vis-à-vis East Asia, remains modest in design, and modest in likely effect.

It is important to note that the region is important because South Korea and Japan contribute to Canada’s economic prosperity and disruption to their economies (due to attacks) could affect Canada:

Table 1.4 – Trading Relations – Canada – Korea – Japan in 2021

Item	South Korea	Japan
GDP	\$2.3T	\$6.2T
Size of Economy	13 th in world	3 rd in world
Population	51.7M	125.7M
Trade-Imports	\$10.3B	\$15.5B
Trade-Exports	\$6.3B	\$14.5B
Note	Canada’s 7 th largest merchandise export market	Canada’s 4 th largest trading partner
Source: Global Affairs Canada, <i>Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy</i>, 10, 12.		

Source: Global Affairs Canada, *Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy*, 10, 12.

Canada could also Contribute by Deploying Future Warships to the Region

Canada could, in the future, deploy its Surface Combatants, equipped with AEGIS system, to contribute to BMD by intercepting missiles in the mid-course phase in East Asia or defend Canada’s shores. A layered missile defense system can work as demonstrated by Israel’s recent interception of Iranian missiles (with U.S. assistance).⁷²

⁶⁸ Global Affairs Canada. *Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy* (Ottawa: GAC Canada, 2022), 3.

⁶⁹ Department of National Defense. *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 51, 54, 92. Confusingly, while South Korea and Japan were not mentioned, China was highlighted.

⁷⁰ Global Affairs Canada. *Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy*, 5, 15.

⁷¹ Global Affairs Canada. *Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy*, 10-12, 14-15.

⁷² Kyle Balzer, “Israel’s Layered Defense and Lessons for the Western Pacific,” 17 April 2024, Recently, Israel’s Arrow 3, its exo-atmospheric anti-ballistic missile system, successfully intercepted several

In East Asia, the Americans have re-tasked some (six) warships for BMD protection duties. While appreciated by her Asian allies (such as Japan), the US Navy (USN) clearly does not desire to continue with these responsibilities (as it limits their freedom of movement) and have sought greater allied burden sharing.⁷³ Canada's yet to be constructed Surface Combatant of fifteen frigates are expected to have the AEGIS system (which can help detect and intercept ballistic missiles in the mid-course phase).⁷⁴ While the AEGIS BMD ship-borne system was originally designed to intercept shorter range missiles in theatre, it has expanded to contribute to BMD and can even intercept missiles above the atmosphere.⁷⁵ It has shown promising signs of progress.⁷⁶

Basing some Canadian warships in East Asia with the USN will help signal that Canada is more serious about the region, and more serious about security and defense. Having BMD capable ships will also increase Canada's interoperability with other navies, including the US, Japan, and South Korea.⁷⁷ Supporting BMD duties at sea, through occasional rotations, could position Canada to be seen as a supporter to East Asian friends, and just as importantly, to America.

Challenges remain. Despite undergoing the largest naval recapitalization in its history since the Second World War, Canada's navy is in a "critical state", with old ships, lack of personnel (short 20% of its trained personnel) and diminishing capabilities.⁷⁸

Iranian missiles and drones, with substantial assistance from the United States and others. Embassy of Israel to the United States, "US-Israel Missile Defence Cooperation," last accessed 19 May 2024, https://embassies.gov.il/washington/Obama_in_Israel/Pages/US-Israel-Missile-Defense-Cooperation.aspx. It underlined the importance of a layered defence network (Arrow, Iron Dome (short range rocket protection), David's Sling (short range missile protection), and X-Band).

⁷³ Ronald O'Rourke, *Navy Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) Program* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2024), 12-22. The USN ships have been protecting land assets for over a decade; and CSIS: Missile Defence Project, "Aegis Ballistic Missile Defence," last updated 4 August 2021, <https://missilethreat.csis.org/system/aegis/>. The USN intends to eventually grow the BMD-capable ship fleet from 38 to 65 ships by 2025.

⁷⁴ Richard Thomas, "Canadian frigate AEGIS capability to be tested at US site," last modified 20 September 2023, <https://www.naval-technology.com/news/canadian-frigate-aegis-capability-to-be-tested-at-us-site/?cf-view>; David Dunlop, "Canadian Naval Review: A Potential Political Brawl over BMD Capabilities on Canada's CSC Type 26 Frigates?" Last modified 27 November 2023, <https://www.navalreview.ca/2023/11/a-potential-political-brawl-over-bmd-capabilities-on-canadas-csc-type-26-frigates/>.

⁷⁵ Ronald O'Rourke, *Navy Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) Program*, 2-4.

⁷⁶ Stephan Gresmak, "Time to go Ballistic," 17-19. Testing since 2002 shows an approximately 80% success rate.

⁷⁷ Stephan Gresmak, "Time to go Ballistic," 19; Eunhyuk Cha, "Naval News: South Korea Approves Procurement of SM-3 For Ballistic Missile Defense," last modified 27 April 2024, <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2024/04/south-korea-approves-procurement-of-sm-3-for-ballistic-missile-defense/>.

⁷⁸ Naval Association of Canada, *Canada in Extremis: Rebalancing the Canadian Armed Forces and Rebuilding the Navy* (Ottawa: Naval Association of Canada, 2024), 10; The RCN went from having a shortage of less than 100 in trained personnel (trained effective strength) (2013) to 850 (2020), growing further to 1,000 (2021), then 1,400+ (2022). For context, refer to Department of National Defence, 1258-201 (CRS), *Chief of Review Services: Evaluation of Naval Forces* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2013), 15-16; Department of National Defence, "RCN working to increase enrollment and examine sailor workload," last modified 8 March 2022, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/maple-leaf/rcn/2022/03/rcn-increase-enrollment.html>; and Lee Berthiaume, "Canada's navy facing personnel

However, given that it may be a decade before new Canadian combatants would start to be operational, Canada should have time to resolve its personnel crisis.⁷⁹

Conclusion

Despite decades of international efforts through war and sanctions, the North Korean regime has survived. It now possesses missiles capable of reaching North America. It is extremely unlikely that the North Korean regime under dictator Kim Jong Un will denuclearize, as it considers nuclear weapons a necessity for its survival. It has also built-up weapons of mass destruction to counter the military superiority of South Korea. In this context, Canada's options to influence North Korea are limited.

Canada has historically played a generally modest role on the peninsula, starting with the deployment of a small number of missionaries. Canada's role was usually tolerated and welcomed. During the Korean War, Canada's provided significant support to its ally, the United States, as it led a U.N. sanctioned mission to push back against the North Korean threat. Canada's contribution included warships, soldiers and air support. Following the armistice, the Canadian presence decreased, but it never completely left the peninsula. Canada continued to support the U.S. and South Korea, through periodic ship deployments, personnel, moral support, participation in the U.N. Command and sanctioning the North Korean regime. None of this has deterred North Korea from increasing its arsenal. The growing threat posed by the despotic regime of Kim Jong Un necessitates that Canada deepen its security relations with allies and reconsider its opposition to ballistic missile defence.

Missile defense systems show promise and is now endorsed by many other states and is a formal part of NATO's mission. Canada's decision to remain outside of BMD has perplexed its strongest ally and partner. Reconsidering opposition to BMD may help to further strengthen defense relations with the United States and bolster NORAD. The nature of the participation and potential costs would be up for negotiations. One area that could be leveraged is through Canada's yet to be built surface combatants. Options to strengthening defense relations through presence in East Asia and contribution to aspects of BMD in East Asia could also be explored.

Recognizing limitations in Canada's ability to influence world events, particularly on the Korean peninsula, Canada should reconsider its opposition to ballistic missile defence.

'crisis' as vacancy nearly 20%: commander," last modified 27 September 2022, <https://globalnews.ca/news/9159765/royal-canadian-navy-personnel-crisis/>.

⁷⁹ Public Services & Procurement Canada, "Canadian surface combatant," last modified 19 January 2024, <https://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/amd-dp/mer-sea/sncn-nss/navcom-surfcom-eng.html>.

Appendix 1 - Public References to Canada Condemning North Korea, 2009-2013

Date	Title of Release	PM = Prime Minister / FM = Foreign Minister	Level
2009			
April 5	Canada Expresses Serious Concern over North Korean Long-Range Rocket Launch		FM
Apr 15	Canada Expresses Concern at North Korean Nuclear Announcement		FM
May 25	Statement by PM unequivocally condemning the North Korean regime's nuclear test		PM
June 12	Canada Welcomes Security Council Resolution 1874 on North Korea		FM
July 5	Canada Condemns North Korea's Latest Ballistic Missile Launches		FM
November 10	Minister Cannon Pays Tribute to Canadians Who Served in Korean War		FM
2010			
March 19	Address to the Chambre de Commerce de Québec		FM
March 22	Address to the Economic Club Concerning the G8 Foreign Ministers Meeting		FM
March 30	Statement by PM Harper at the G8 Foreign Ministers' Meeting		PM
May 3	Address at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT		FM
May 16	Canadian Naval Expertise to Assist in Multinational Investigation into the <i>Cheonan</i>		FM
May 19	Statement by Ministers on the Results of the Enquiry into the Sinking of the <i>Cheonan</i>		FM
May 20	Address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to Montreal Council on Foreign Relations		FM
May 24	Statement by PM in regards of the announcement by President Lee Myung-bak		PM
May 26	Statement on the Situation in the Korean Peninsula		FM
May 29	Canada Welcomes Successful Result of NPT of Nuclear Weapons Review Conference		FM
June 16	Statement by Minister Cannon on UNSC Meeting on Sinking of <i>Cheonan</i>		FM
June 18	Address to University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs		FM
June 20	Address on Occasion of Release of Muskoka Accountability Report		FM
June 24	Canada Welcomes Nomination of UN Special Rapporteur on North Korean HR		FM
July 9	Statement by PM on the UNSC statement condemning the attack on the <i>Cheonan</i>		PM
August 10	Address by PS at Conference on North Korea Human Rights and Refugees – Toronto		PM
October 28	Minister Announces Policy to Limit Engagement with North Korea		FM
November 23	Statement by PM on North Korea (RE: Yeonpyeong Island)		PM

2011			
March 10	Address at <i>John Diefenbaker Defender of Human Rights and Freedom Award</i>		FM
June 30	Minister Expresses Disappointment over North Korea's <u>Chairmanship</u>		FM
July 11	Canada Boycotts UN Conference on Disarmament Under North Korea's Presidency		FM
August 13	Statement by PM on the 50 th Anniversary of the construction of the Berlin Wall		PM
August 15	Minister Baird Welcomes Expanded Sanctions Against North Korea		FM
September 26	Address by Minister Baird to the UN General Assembly		FM
December 19	Statement by the PM Harper on death of Kim Jong-il		PM
2012			
March 27	Minister Baird Visited the Demilitarized Zone between North and South Korea		FM
April 12	Baird Strongly Condemns North Korea's Rocket Launch		FM
September 21	Baird Statement on Human Rights in North Korea		FM
October 1	Address by Minister Baird to UN General Assembly		FM
December 3	Canada Warns North Korea Against Provocation		FM
December 4	Prime Minister Harper Delivers remarks celebrating the Year of Korea		PM
December 10	Baird Marks Human Rights Day		FM
December 11	Baird Strongly Condemns Actions of North Korean Regime		FM
2013			
January 23	Baird Urges North Korea to Abandon Nuclear Weapons Program		FM
February 12	Canada Unequivocally Condemns North Korean Nuclear Test		FM
March 7	Baird Welcomes Expanded Sanctions Against North Korea		FM
March 21	Baird Welcomes UN Human Rights Council Resolution on North Korea		FM
April 5	Baird Addresses North Korean Threats		FM
September 9	Baird Comments on North Korea's Anniversary		FM
December 4	Canada Tightens Sanctions Against North Korea		FM

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